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General Assembly
Seventy-first session

Official Records

4th plenary meeting
Monday, 19 September 2016, 9.30 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Thomson ..... (Fiji)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

High-level plenary meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants

Agenda items 13 and 117 (*continued*)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Co-Chair Thomson: Before we begin the list of speakers, I would like to turn to some organizational matters pertaining to the conduct of the plenary meeting.

In accordance with resolution 70/290, of 30 June 2016, the list of speakers was established on the basis that statements would have a time limit of up to four minutes. To assist speakers in managing their time, a light system has been installed at the speaker's rostrum. May I appeal to all speakers for their cooperation in observing the time limit of their statements, so that all those inscribed will be heard in a timely manner.

The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Sauli Niinistö, President of Finland.

President Niinistö: I would like to start by expressing my gratitude to the Secretary-General for organizing today's meeting. The issue is of the utmost importance. More than 30,000 people are forcibly displaced every single day. Most of those flows originate from man-made conflicts. The scale of human suffering is heart-wrenching. We are facing ever-increasing needs for humanitarian assistance. The current United Nations humanitarian funding gap is $13.3 billion. Finland fully supports the initiative and leadership of the United Nations. I wish to express my appreciation for the dedication and professionalism of key agencies, particularly the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration, in their responses to the current crisis. Three interrelated issues warrant discussion.

First, people fleeing for their lives must be given adequate protection. I want to highlight the rights of refugee and migrant women and children. Promoting gender equality is a long-standing priority in Finland. Women and children are disproportionately affected when caught in large, uncontrolled migratory movements. Too many are subjected to violence and crimes, such as human trafficking. The rights of those vulnerable groups must be respected in all settings. In the spirt of leaving no one behind, Finland promotes the inclusion of persons with disabilities in development and humanitarian action. A recent step is the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action, launched at the World Humanitarian Summit, held in Istanbul in May. Finland spearheaded that initiative and encourages all stakeholders to endorse it.

Secondly, dealing with the present refugee and migration flows is not enough. We have seen only the beginning of this phenomenon. We must therefore urgently improve the management of the flows and deal with their root causes. We must increase our efforts to

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avert and resolve conflicts, prevent displacement and facilitate the voluntary and safe return of refugees. We need sustainable peace, economic growth and prospects for people in their home countries. A core issue is the promotion of human rights, the rule of law and good governance. Finland does that by, for example, supporting the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Finally, we must keep in mind that migration is not only a problem; it has always been one of the key factors in development. Orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration is a resource we cannot afford to waste. While we strive to prevent forced migration and to address the drivers of irregular migration, we appreciate that mobility can boost economic growth and reduce poverty. We call for all Member States to fully implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in that regard.

I believe that none of us can forget the Yazidi woman whom we just heard saying,

"[w]e also deserve a life" (*A/71/PV.3, p. 11*).

Co-Chair Thomson: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Filipe Jacinto Nyusi, President of Mozambique.

President Nyusi: At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, for presiding over this high-level meeting on large movements of migrants and refugees, which is an opportunity for members of the international community to reflect and exchange ideas on how to address the complex challenges posed by the plight of refugees and migrants.

The phenomenon of refugees and migration is the consequence of deep development imbalances among countries. In Africa, and particularly in my country, Mozambique, the migration of the labour force is a current and historical reality.

Recognizing the importance of refugees and migrants and their impact on the economic, political, social and cultural life of our continent, Governments have taken steps to set up a strategic framework for African policies on refugees and migration. The overall objective of that strategic framework is to encourage African States to implement the integration of refugee and migration issues into their national and regional agendas through the development of national policies. That framework is intended to address a multitude of challenges, such as border problems threatening peace and security, the building of mechanisms to protect refugees and combat trafficking, and investing in human resource development so as to mitigate brain drain and promote regional integration cooperation and economic growth through infrastructure development.

Mozambique has a long history of labour migrating to such countries as South Africa, Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Tanzania, Kenya and Yemen, among others. Guided by its experiences, knowledge, the spirit of solidarity and respect for the rights of refugees and migrants, Mozambique has hosted more than 23,000 asylum-seekers as a way of dealing with mixed immigration flows, in particular from the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes region of Africa. Most of those peoples leave their countries of origin owing to natural disasters, economic hardship or political instability. Most recently, in mid-July 2015, following a military skirmish by Mozambique National Resistance armed elements, thousands of Mozambican citizens from Tete province sought shelter in Malawi. Fortunately, as the situation returns to normal, most of those citizens have returned home. More than 1,500 are reported to remain in Malawi. This has been possible due to the culmination of efforts by the Government of Mozambique, Malawi and the United Nations Office in Pretoria after appropriate procedures were followed, including the signing of a voluntary repatriation agreement. The Government of Mozambique remains committed to providing necessary monetary assistance to those citizens.

Co-Chair Thomson: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Raimonds Vējonis, President of the Republic of Latvia.

President Vējonis: I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to the Secretary-General for having convened this meeting. I welcome the agreement reached on the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (resolution 71/1).

The global migration and displacement crisis has reached unprecedented levels and continues to grow. The scale of the problem is of the highest humanitarian concern. Addressing this phenomenon as it manifests worldwide is an enormous task. Political will and resources will be required on the part of all, and therefore shared global responsibility must be regarded as the underlying principle of our commitments today.

Our immediate attention must be focused on reinforcing our efforts to protect refugees, to support those hosting them and to develop safe and sustainable reception capacities close to their home countries. Latvia is working with other European Union (EU) member States to develop and implement a common EU policy on resettlement and humanitarian admission.

As Latvia participates in EU relocation and resettlement schemes, we remain mindful of the fact that countries cannot address migration challenges on their own.

These are global challenges that call for a global response. Latvia has supported and will continue to support efforts to strengthen the United Nations refugee response system.

It is our duty to ensure legal entry options for people who are in need of international protection. At the same time, States need adequate means to fight the abuse of existing systems and mechanisms. Furthermore, international border-management cooperation, as an important element of the security of States, is necessary.

Regular, safe and orderly migration can be achieved only through a comprehensive, coherent and long-term policy framework that addresses the drivers behind migration but also ensures the right of each country to determine whom to admit. A humane and effective return and readmission policy is integral and essential for a functional, comprehensive and sustainable migration policy.

The commitments undertaken today address mainly the consequences of migration flows from the Middle East and North Africa. However, we must not forget the root causes, and we must look further for long-term solutions. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted a year ago, is a great tool at our disposal to create conditions conducive to balanced, sustainable and inclusive development and contribute to the resolution and prevention of conflicts. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda is therefore crucial for tackling the root causes of large movements of migrants and refugees.

Let me conclude by reiterating our commitment to work together with States Members of the United Nations and other stakeholders to strengthen the governance of international migration. We are also certain that we must take this opportunity to create a more responsible and predictable system in order to respond effectively to large movements of refugees and migrants.

Co-Chair Thomson: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Michel Temer, President of the Federative Republic of Brazil.

President Temer (*spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation*): The images of children whose lives have been cut short by terror and conflict have appalled the world. The lives lost in the pursuit of survival in other countries impel us to reflect and, above all, to take action.

Almost 70 years ago, the Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that every person who suffers persecution has the right to seek shelter in other countries. It is high time to translate this right into concrete measures.

This is the first time that the Assembly has addressed issues related to refugees and migration together. We cannot close our eyes to the deep-rooted causes of these two phenomena. Only properly negotiated solutions to political crises and inclusive development for all will prevent the forced displacement of large numbers of people.

Let us be clear: the flows of refugees are the result of wars, repression and violent extremism, not their causes. The legitimate concerns of Governments for the security of their citizens must be fully in line with the rights that are inherent to every human being. If we forgo an uncompromising defence of these rights, we will by extension be forgoing our own humanity. In our relations with foreigners, with others, we ultimately test our loyalty to these values and our commitment to civilization itself.

Brazil is a country that built itself up on the strength of millions of people from all continents. We value our diversity. Immigrants have made, and continue to make, a significant contribution to our development. Furthermore, immigrants are an essential part of our own identity. At the Rio Olympics and Paralympics, we had the honour of welcoming the first delegation of refugees ever to compete in the Games.

In recent years, Brazil has welcomed more than 95,000 refugees from 79 different countries. We are keenly aware of the fact that welcoming refugees is a shared responsibility. We are engaged in refugee resettlement initiatives in our region, with special attention paid to the needs of women and children.

In our country, even before the recognition of their legal situation, refugees are given broad access to job opportunities and public services, including education and health care. We have worked with the United Nations to ensure that procedures are in place for the swift granting of refugee status.

We are also working with our Latin American brothers and sisters in the context of several initiatives to support refugees. In the Brazilian Parliament today, a new bill on migration is currently in its final stages of review. Our goal is to guarantee rights, foster greater inclusion and avoid criminalization of migrants. The new legislation will provide for humanitarian visas, a tool that has already been used in the past to help almost 85,000 Haitian citizens following the 2010 earthquake, as well as nearly 2,300 people affected by the Syrian conflict. At the very core of our policies is an unalienable recognition of the dignity that is inherent to all migrants.

We live in times that require boldness and courage. During the Second World War, Luiz Martins de Souza Dantas, then Brazilian Ambassador in Paris, took the initiative of issuing hundreds of visas to save the lives of persecuted European citizens. Souza Dantas acted out of a moral imperative, convinced that he was acting according to the values of Brazilian society. He was ahead of his time, and we must be ahead of ours.

Co-Chair Thomson: The General Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Li Keqiang, Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China.

Mr. Li Keqiang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Over a month ago at the opening of the Rio Olympic Games, the world saw the first-ever refugee Olympic team. With their courage and perseverance, the athletes let the international community know that, while they are far from their homes and still moving from one place to another, they are still fighting for their hopes and dreams, for which they deserve our respect. At present, the issue of refugees and migrants has become more prominent, and this meeting today is the first of its kind aimed at addressing large movements of refugees and migrants since the founding of the United Nations. The international community is devoting great attention to this matter. I would like to share several observations.

First, the issue concerns peace and development in the world and affects regional stability. Large movements of refugees and migrants affect or trigger a series of political, social and security issues. Today, the number of refugees and migrants is surging at a rate and scale not seen in decades. That not only has an impact on the development of the countries concerned, while threatening regional peace and stability, but also hinders the recovery of the world economy, affects international order and creates opportunities for terrorists to exploit.

Although it concerns specific regions, migration is a global issue. No country can remain immune. The international community must react vigorously. The issue represents a humanitarian crisis that tests the human conscience. We are all living in the same global village, where every life is precious and the dignity of every person deserves to be protected. Many refugees suffer from hunger, disease and worse during their displacement. Many have gone missing or have lost their lives in the process, which is a serious shock to humankind's conscience. The spirit of humanitarianism must be promoted, and basic moral principles must not be compromised. The international community needs to help refugees, enable them to feel warmth and care once again, and rekindle their hope.

As we seek to tend to the migrant crisis in Europe, similar attention should also be paid to the disastrous situations in Syria, Afghanistan, Somalia and South Sudan, among other places. Addressing the issuerequires enhanced international cooperation. Efforts should be made to formulate and implement a comprehensive solution under the framework of the United Nations. It is important to ensure that Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration, which should fully play their coordinating roles. The principle of non-refoulement stipulated in the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees must be fully respected. Complex history and national circumstances must also be taken into account. All shareholders should shoulder its respective responsibilities.

Transit and destination countries need to fulfil their roles, based on their abilities. It is imperative to mobilize funds and relief so as to ensure coverage of the basic daily needs of refugees. It is equally vital to broaden the channel for legal migrants and to fight human trafficking and terrorist acts. Settlement will not be possible without the efforts of the countries of origin. Conflict, poverty and underdevelopment are the root causes of the refugee problem. The relevant parties need to resolve their disputes and disagreements

through dialogue and consultation. The international community should contribute to peace talks, promote inclusive growth and maintain social unity and stability.

China has always attached great importance to, and has taken an active part in, addressing these issues. We did what we could to help, even when China was poor. While China has made great progress with regard to its economy — and yet it is still a developing country — it is committed to shouldering its responsibilities commensurate with its abilities. That is an act of justice.

We would like to provide $100 million of humanitarian assistance to countries and international organizations, beyond the level of our previous aid. At the same time, we will consider taking further supportive measures. We will seriously consider devoting funds from the China-United Nations Peace and Development Trust Fund to support developing countries in their efforts to address the issue of refugees and migrants. We will actively explore trilateral cooperation with international institutions and developing countries.

China hopes that today's meeting will provide a new start to full consensus among parties and create new synergy that leads to an early, comprehensive and lasting solution to the problems raised by the large movements of refugees and migrants.

Co-Chair Thomson: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Nicos Anastasiades, President of the Republic of Cyprus.

President Anastasiades: At the outset, I would like to express my appreciation to the Secretary-General and the former President of the General Assembly, as well as the co-facilitators, the representatives of Ireland and Jordan, for their valuable work in preparing this high-level meeting.

In that respect, I wish to state that Cyprus fully and unwaveringly endorses the outcome document (resolution 71/1), which highlights our collective commitment to addressing large movements of refugees and migrants. We are facing an unprecedented humanitarian crisis, which is the consequence, on the one hand, of economic insecurity, poor standards of living and the lack of educational opportunities in those countries in which migratory flows are observed, and, on the other hand, of the ongoing turmoil, extremism, sectarianism, civil war and terrorism occurring in the Middle East, North Africa and other regions of the world. Therefore, addressing the root causes of large and long-term movements of refugees and migrants should be at the core of the international community's strategy.

First, we should focus our efforts so as to ensure that all those countries in need are turned into places in which sustainable development becomes a reality. Accordingly, our economic support should be well-targeted and results-oriented, so as to create the political and socioeconomic conditions that will deter people from migrating.

Secondly, we need to effectively promote regional peace in order to end ongoing conflicts and prevent future ones. In that respect, Cyprus is committed to cooperating with other partners and neighbours in creating effective partnerships in the eastern Mediterranean, thereby generating the necessary conditions for regional peace, security, stability and prosperity.

In parallel and in that connection, we should also jointly and comprehensively direct our efforts towards fighting human traffickers and the enablers of terrorism. The Republic of Cyprus is already carrying out actions based on the principle of shared responsibility. Most recently, in our capacity as a State member of the European Union, we accepted the resettlement of refugees in our country and introduced measures aimed at the recognition and protection of victims of trafficking, the prosecution and conviction of traffickers, the enhancement of bilateral cooperation on supporting refugees, and migration management.

As we wait for the relevant report of the Secretary-General at the seventy-first session, I would like to assure members that my country will work towards the effective implementation of the commitments made at today's high-level meeting. It is my firm belief that the achievement of those commitments, based on the principles of solidarity, shared responsibility and respect for human rights and dignity, will be an important indicator of the Organization's success and relevance. It will also be a demonstration of our political will and determination to respond to the expectations of our citizens for the benefit of humankind.

Co-Chair Thomson: The General Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Estonia, His Excellency Mr. Toomas Ilves.

President Ilves: Estonia welcomes the unique initiative by the Secretary-General that has made

it possible, for the very first time, for us, for the entire international community, to discuss refugee and migration issues in a single United Nations-led framework. This enables us to tackle the deficits in the global governance system on an issue that touches upon numerous policy areas with huge implications for security, stability and development around the world. It reminds us that the commitment and joint engagement by the international community have been there for many decades, namely, to act in a spirit of human dignity and in cooperation with each other in order to help vulnerable people escaping from war and terror, from political or social persecution, from poverty and hunger. But we need to commit to do more. Let us face it. This is not an unprecedented crisis. The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency after the Second World War had to deal refugee flows of a larger order of magnitude than today. They committed up to $50 billion in today's dollars to do so. That is what we have to think about today.

But today we are talking about children, the most vulnerable, and I speak as the child of refugees. Around the world, the number of child refugees and migrants amounts to nearly 50 million children. In just 10 years, the number of child refugees has more than doubled, and it continues to grow. That shocking statistic shows that we need to commit to action. It is our duty to help children gain a foothold, protection, health and education — in other words, a normal life.

Estonia devotes special attention to the plight of child refugees and migrants, and is working towards strengthening child protection and integration measures in European and national legislative frameworks and practices, including education, health, social and legal services, as well as measures to combat discrimination and xenophobia.

Providing refugee and migrant children with an education and giving them equal access to various fields of social life and public services helps to build a safer and stronger society. Let me give some examples: first, in the refugee camp in Zaatar, Jordan, Estonia has equipped computer classes and provided computer lessons for primary schoolchildren in the camp. Secondly, local governments in Estonia have resettled Syrian refugees from Turkey or relocated refugees from Greece and have immediately ensured that all children, from the age of one-and-a-half to 17, are in enrolled in education, either in kindergarten, elementary or primary school.

We therefore believe that the practical steps and actions of Estonia and of other European Union member States address the main concerns and suggestions laid out by UNICEF in its latest report, entitled "Uprooted: the growing crisis for refugee and migrant children".

Mr. Nalbandian (Armenia), Acting Co-Chair, took the Chair.

It is equally important to address the causes of conflict, violence and extreme poverty in countries of origin of the migration. In that context, the initiative of the European Union on a new migration partnership framework with third countries under the European agenda on migration is more timely than ever. Tailor-made migration compacts with the countries of origin, which are being developed and implemented in a spirit of mutual ownership, will contribute to peaceful conflict resolution, an advanced political, social and economic situation and to a better life for everyone.

The Acting Co-Chair: The General Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. William Ruto, Deputy President of the Republic of Kenya.

Deputy President Ruto: I commend the convening of this meeting, which sheds light on the plight of people in search of safety and dignity. I also wish to extend Kenya's gratitude to the Secretary-General for convening the World Humanitarian Summit in May this year. The Summit refocused the world's attention on the plight of refugees, migrants and internally displaced persons throughout the world.

We live in a world of unprecedented prosperity, technological advancement, expanded democracy and globalization, and yet, in spite of those milestones, we are experiencing the largest number of displaced persons since the Second World War. There cannot be a greater indictment of the international community than those incongruous realities.

Clearly, the framework designed to respond to human distress has become ineffectual. Throughout history, the development of the world has been predicated on the movement of people. And I say so with clarity, realizing that this great city of New York, this great country of the United States of America and many other cities and countries around the world are themselves a product of the movement of people and migration. In fact, as long as we have villages, towns and neighbourhoods that are unsafe, and as long as we have ravaging hunger and poverty, migration will

continue to be part of human history. In any case, migration itself and the movement of people is as old as humankind.

How is it that in the twenty-first century a phenomenon that has driven commerce and prosperity has now become subject to xenophobia driven by discrimination, persecution and inhumane treatment? How is it that the world is experiencing a steady decline in non-compliance with the principle of burden-sharing?

Since independence, Kenya has been host to hundreds of thousands of refugees and displaced persons. Over many decades, we have evolved as a bastion of international solidarity in the protection and assistance of populations in distress. Today, as I address this meeting, Kenya is among the 10 countries in the world that are home to the largest population of refugees and displaced persons. In fact, the Dadaab Refugee Complex is the single-largest community of refugees anywhere in the world — with 400,000 people living in one complex.

As a result of our realization as a country of our commitment to the international community and our obligations, we have made a home and shared the resources that are available to the people of Kenya with hundreds of thousands of refugees who have come to our country. We have shared our water, infrastructure and electricity. Even though our environment is fragile and there has sometimes been competition between local communities and the refugees, we have continued to play a role in the international arena in ensuring that our population shares whatever we have with the refugees. I dare say that 170,000 refugees have landed in our institutions in Kenya. The law in Kenya mandates that every child should go to school. We share education facilities with our refugee brothers and sisters.

Let me also say that the Government of Kenya is working to realize its obligations to support its brothers and sisters in distress. It has contributed troops and equipment to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), which was established in order to stabilize Somalia so that refugees can find a place to go back to and call home.

In conclusion, allow me to say that the Government of Kenya has also contributed $10 million in an arrangement between the Government of Kenya, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Government to Somalia to ensure a safe, orderly and humane return of refugees to Somalia.

The international community pledged $500 million to support that exercise. As I speak to the Assembly today, less than 1 per cent of that money has been deposited in five years. I wish therefore to remind the international community forcefully at this meeting that, now that we have adopted resolution 71/1, entitled "New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants", the international community has a debt to the people of Somalia, first, to support AMISOM so that we can continue to have safe areas where Somali refugees can go back to; secondly, to support the Government of Somalia so as to ensure that there is infrastructure enabling that country to support its citizens; and, thirdly, to support the orderly repatriation of refugees back home.

I hope that the international community will do as it has pledged under the New York Declaration.

The Acting Co-Chair: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Idriss Deby Itno, President of the Republic of Chad.

President Deby Itno (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for having convened this high-level meeting on large movements of refugees and migrants.

It should be recalled that this meeting comes on the heels of the World Humanitarian Summit, held four months ago in Istanbul. The Istanbul Summit, which focused on the theme of humankind as one entity with a shared responsibility, was an opportunity for the entire international community to renew its commitment to fully consider this thorny humanitarian issue. During the Summit, leaders from the entire world assumed their responsibilities to the peoples of the world by committing themselves to driving forward the Agenda for Humanity, which was established by the Secretary-General. Millions of men and, above all, women and children are victims of conflicts and natural disasters, which means that they have to leave their homes under terrible conditions. Africa is one of the theatres of such tragedies.

My country, Chad, aptly illustrates the humanitarian problem of today. Chad welcomes hundreds of thousands of refugees and displaced persons fleeing hotbeds of tension. It should be noted that, after Kenya and Ethiopia, Chad has hosted the

most refugees, estimated at approximately 750,000 people from 2003 to today. In addition, there are also 130,000 Chadian returnees from the Central African Republic, who are still awaiting reintegration in their respective hosting areas on the national territory. We are one of the first countries to have ratified the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa. Chad is fulfilling its international commitments and, with the support of its partners, in particular the United Nations, the European Union and the International Organization for Migration, it has provided emergency assistance by hosting and providing the necessary protection to displaced persons, refugees and migrants.

With regard to refugees and displaced persons, after the crises in Darfur, the Central African Republic and Libya, Chad has experienced since 2015 new humanitarian situations as a result of the atrocities committed by Boko Haram. According to current information from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, more than 2,300,000 people are in need of assistance. The Government has responded to that situation by developing, together with its partners, a humanitarian response plan, which is based on three strategic objectives, namely, saving lives, strengthening resilience and analysing risks and vulnerabilities. The greatest challenge is the financing of the plan, whose budget is estimated to be $500 million. The lack of financing for the response plan is likely to lead to a greater number of people with acute food insecurity, a lack of appropriate health-care services, a risk of an outbreak of epidemics, a lack of access to education for more than 230,000 children, a lack of protection for more than 650,000 million displaced people and a lack of access to drinking water and sanitation facilities for displaced people and high-risk populations.

I would like to welcome the high-level visit of the delegation of the American Government, the European Union and the United Nations, which came to Chad in July in order to ease the tensions surrounding the acute humanitarian situation in the Lake Chad Basin. I also wish to see an urgent response by the international community aimed at helping people in the region in their efforts to address these crises.

While I welcome the adoption of resolution 71/1, on refugees and migrants, I would like to underscore the need to look seriously at the causes of this humanitarian situation, which are, among other things, insecurity, terrorism, poverty and climate change, and their corollaries, which are violence, instability and migration. Therefore, we must take action aimed at the root of the evil rather than limiting ourselves to addressing the consequences, which are always tragic in humanitarian terms.

The Acting Co-Chair: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Abdel Fattah Al Sisi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

President Al Sisi (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate the Secretary-General for holding this meeting. I also commend the outstanding efforts undertaken in the previous session aimed at achieving the important objectives of addressing the large and unprecedented flows of migration together with their concomitant challenges.

I would like to underscore our national efforts aimed at maximizing the benefits of migration. We have put the relevant legislative frameworks at the top of our national priorities. The law regarding combating human trafficking was enacted in 2010. Egypt has strengthened its efforts to raise awareness of the risks associated with the illegal migration of young people and has taken steps to provide rehabilitation services for the young, in addition to efforts on the part of the security and armed forces aimed at preventing any attempt to smuggle migrants and at arresting criminal elements in order to subject them to applicable due process.

In accordance with our ongoing commitment and sense of responsibility, we are keen to participate in the relevant international organizations and institutions at the Arab, African and international levels, in particular through the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration. We emphasize the development aspect and have refrained from closing borders, thereby protecting refugees in accordance with international rules. Proceeding from our ongoing commitment, we are bearing the burden of hosting huge numbers of refugees and asylum-seekers. As many as 5 million persons, registered and non-registered, have arrived. We are trying to provide them with decent living arrangements without placing them in shelters. Many refugees enjoy equal treatment as Egyptian nationals and are receiving shelter, housing and health-care services, despite the overburdened State budget.

We agree that combating illegal migration should be at the very top of our international priorities. There is no way to stop illegal migration without treating its

root causes. We must develop political solutions for the crises we see in the region, and not by closing borders, while remaining mindful of human rights law.

Migration is of value for the designated States of destination; migrants promote trade and commerce. We view with concern the increasingly alarming manifestations of xenophobia and racial discrimination against refugees and migrants in several places around the world. This often appears in the form of violent practices by some States, such as the confiscation of property or the targeting of refugee minors and women by extremist groups. If we fail to take care of their needs, we will be remiss in our duties.

We welcome the efforts of the Secretary-General and the Under-Secretary-General and their call for exerting further efforts to enhance joint cooperation in support of economic development and political solutions, while creating a unified vision and providing refugees and migrants with decent living conditions, respecting their human rights and treating the main causes behind migration. It is high time for international action, and there is a need to build on the momentum. Once again, I would like to reiterate Egypt's commitment to supporting the efforts designed to address the issues of migration and asylum-seekers, and I call on the Assembly to enhance cooperation in support of economic development and to develop political solutions to the conflicts in the region, so that people will not be displaced in search of shelter.

The Acting Co-Chair: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Faiez Mustafa Serraj, President of the Presidency Council and Prime Minister of the Government of National Accord of Libya.

President Serraj (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate the President of the General Assembly for convening this meeting, which provides a historic opportunity to reach agreement on addressing the issue of large movements of refugees and migrants and ensuring respect for their human rights. Migration is a long-standing issue, and, as human beings, we have long migrated in search of resources and security. Today, we are witnessing an unprecedented level of human migration, giving rise to an increased need to offer protection and humanitarian assistance, which is due to deteriorating economic situations, the eruption of armed conflicts, the violation of human rights, natural disasters and environmental deterioration. We are alarmed at the large flows of illegal migration, where migrants are beset by dangers and some die when subjected to exploitation by the criminal networks that smuggle them.

Libya, as a transit State, is adversely affected by the migration phenomenon. It is facing challenges as a result of the inflows of illegal migration. Many of the migrants do not even have identification papers. A vast number of men, women and children are risking their lives in unsafe journeys throughout the Mediterranean region, heading to Europe, with the intention of leaving behind the insecurity and despair that they experience in their countries. Organized criminal networks have utilized the situation and aggravated insecurity in Libya. The challenges of illegal migration are challenges from which all States of the world are suffering. Therefore, tackling those challenges is not just the responsibility of Libya but requires regional and international efforts. Despite the difficulties faced by the Government of National Accord, it is trying its best to protect the rights of those refugees and combat the smuggling of and trade in such people. We would like to emphasize the preparedness of our Government to cooperate with all international efforts to prevent the loss of lives on the Mediterranean Sea and to deal with this humanitarian disaster and alleviate the suffering of illegal refugees, taking into consideration the need to respect the principles of international law and the sovereignty of States.

We are trying our best to return to the fold of the international family, so that we can coordinate with the international community and close the doors to the trade in death. That will be useful for the economy and the security of our State and neighbouring States, as well as Arab, African and European States. That will also help us to achieve reconstruction and to absorb millions of workers and attract global firms. We state, as a matter of principle, that illegal migration cannot be treated solely by security means. It can be treated effectively in the State of origin. That requires international efforts as well as concerted efforts by relevant States, which, in turn, requires helping them to improve their economic circumstances, which will be of use to their citizens. Developed States should help the developing States and provide official development assistance in cooperation and coordination with regional organizations.

We are meeting a year after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The implementation of that Agenda will help to address

many of the root causes of migration, eliminate poverty and activate international partnerships. We welcome the provisions of the Paris Agreement on climate change, which is designed to prevent many aspects of displacement resulting from climate change. We hope that this meeting will adopt applicable and enforceable resolutions aimed at stemming the flows of refugees, which can be achieved by sincere political will in the maintenance of international peace and security, as we seek to find an effective solution to the question.

The Acting Co-Chair: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Rosen Plevneliev, President of the Republic of Bulgaria.

President Plevneliev: Today's meeting gives us a unique opportunity to agree on a global approach to managing large-scale movements of refugees and migrants. Globally shared responsibility is vital. Common action on the part of the countries of origin, transit and destination should be undertaken in a spirit of mutual support and solidarity.

The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (resolution 71/1), which we adopted today, emphasizes our common objective of strengthening cooperation and coordination within the United Nations system. The establishment of a closer partnership between the United Nations and the International Organization for Migration is a timely and welcome decision. Bulgaria welcomes the valuable contribution of the High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing, co-chaired by the Vice-President of the European Commission, Ms. Kristalina Georgieva, and His Royal Highness Sultan Nazrin Shah of Perak of Malaysia, highlighting the need for closer coordination between humanitarian and development action.

We cannot address the issue unless we resolve the root causes of migration. We need to find a lasting settlement to the conflicts and tackle human rights violations, difficult socioeconomic situations and the lack of good governance in the countries of origin. Respect for international humanitarian law and international human rights law, effective border management and readmission are key elements for managing migration. We welcome the strong reference in the New York Declaration to the full implementation of the existing readmission agreements.

The effectiveness of border controls remains of the utmost importance. That includes full respect for the human rights of asylum-seekers, preventing and combating irregular migration and migrant smuggling and eradicating human trafficking. It is vital to make a clear distinction between refugees and economic migrants, who are not eligible for refugee status. Many irregular migrants become victims of criminal networks and human trafficking when attempting to cross borders illegally.

Bulgaria strictly follows international humanitarian law and human rights law. Our capacity to provide protection has increased significantly. We are particularly committed to the protection of the most vulnerable, including women, children — especially unaccompanied children — and persons with disabilities. Bulgaria provides humanitarian and development assistance to countries of origin and transit. Bulgaria has already launched its first national resettlement programme and strongly supports the appeal to States that have not yet established resettlement programmes to consider doing so at the earliest opportunity.

By adopting the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework in the New York Declaration, we will be able to better protect and assist refugees and support host countries, while putting measures in place to respond to their legitimate security concerns. Future work towards the adoption of a global compact on refugees in 2018 will provide an important opportunity to integrate the prevention and tackling of root causes into the Comprehensive Framework.

My country is determined to participate in the forthcoming process of negotiations leading to the adoption of a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, which would set out a range of principles, commitments and understandings among Member States on international migration in all its dimensions.

The Acting Co-Chair: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Luis Guillermo Solís Rivera, President of the Republic of Costa Rica.

President Solís Rivera (*spoke in Spanish*): Costa Rica enthusiastically welcomes the process that we have begun with the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (resolution 71/1) and its two annexes, which we have adopted today as an international community. The Declaration will enable us to deal with the challenges and provide the necessary means to ensure that refugees can rely on our support and trust and that their safety and dignity will be preserved during and after their journeys.

We welcome such global endeavours, in which we are all politically and morally obligated to contribute proportionally to finding a solution to the migration and refugee problem. It is essential that the responsibilities delegated and undertaken should correspond to the capacities and resources available. Close and coordinated cooperation among the countries of origin, transit and destination is necessary in order to provide mechanisms that will safeguard the security and dignity of migrants, thereby eliminating the many dangers they face throughout their journeys. In that connection, the most vulnerable are women and children, as well as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons, to whom we must pay particular attention in terms of their protection.

Since its independence, in 1821, Costa Rica has been a nation of migrants. We have integrated them, and they have contributed to our society and its specific features, which they have enriched. However, in recent months we have become a country of transit for thousands of people, particularly Haitians coming from Brazil, whose end goal is to achieve a better standard of living.

The current situation is a complex one. The intensity and scale of those flows have meant that we have had to divert the already scarce resources of our country in order to help those people. That has inspired solidarity among our citizens, as well as the establishment of regional mechanisms to carefully safeguard and preserve the human rights and dignity of migrants.

Last year, all Member States undertook to leave no one behind in adopting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Hundreds of millions of people are currently living in countries that are not their own. Without their contributions and their inclusion in the development effort, it will prove impossible to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The economic empowerment of women also requires special attention in that context; it is important to include migrant women and consider their particular needs. That is not only a necessity but also a very intelligent thing to do, in relation to the age-old struggle against violence, discrimination and gender stereotyping that still prevail in our societies.

We are pleased to say that we recently adopted the San José Action Statement, which establishes measures to deal with the growing phenomenon of mixed migratory movements, including the forced displacement of those fleeing violence and exploitation as a result of organized crime groups in the northern triangle of Central America.

We wish once again to say that we welcome such endeavours to strengthen global governance regarding migration, and today we welcome the cooperation agreement signed by the United Nations and the International Organization for Migration, the work and dedication of which we are very grateful for.

We must persevere in those matters, and therefore we support the continuation of the high-level dialogue on migration and development, as well as its realization before 2019. Lastly, I wish to express my congratulations for the efforts aimed at the adoption of a global compact on refugees and a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration in 2018.

The Acting Co-Chair: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Enrique Peña Nieto, President of the United Mexican States.

President Peña Nieto (*spoke in Spanish*): Migrants symbolize the force that has created human progress, namely, movement. The great migrations have taken the human species to the various corners of the Earth in all historical epochs. Throughout time, traditions and ideas, knowledge and technological progress, values and aspirations have travelled with migrations. Cultures are revitalized and enriched when they coexist and dialogue takes place among them. Migrants have been their primary voices. History shows that there are no barriers that can stop either the movement of people and the fusion of cultures or the dissemination of ideas. Neither natural nor artificial barriers hold sway. For every river, there has always been a bridge; for every obstacle, there has always been a way forward. Movement is an essential part of being human, because it reflects an instinct for survival, vital energy and an ardent desire to excel and transcend. Migrants' contributions to the various host societies are undeniable, because all migrants are accompanied by their hope and their identity, their energy and their talent.

Mexico is an example of that. We are a country of origin, transit, destination and return for people. We are a proudly mestizo, multicultural and diverse nation, with a living and vibrant culture that is the fruit of many migrations throughout our history. We Mexicans firmly believe that such mestizo fusion is the future and destiny of humankind. That is why Mexico

welcomes the first high-level meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants at the United Nations. Today's meeting proves that mindsets are also mutable. We must place migrants and their rights, dignity and well-being at the centre of the global dialogue. Mexico will continue participating actively in multilateral forums to devise a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration and a global compact of responsibility-sharing for refugees in 2018.

We believe that such guiding documents should take the following principles into account: first, the use of a human rights approach that sets forth States' obligations to migrants; second, a vision for shared responsibility among the migrants' countries of origin, transit, destination and return; third, the recognition of migrants' contributions to social and economic development; fourth, a focus on social inclusion that contributes to eradicating intolerance, prejudice and racism; fifth, a framework to govern migration that offers alternatives for the safe and orderly management of migratory flows; sixth, greater international cooperation to strengthen States' capacities to devote comprehensive attention to migration, and, seventh, the consideration of climate change and natural phenomena as causes of migration. In order to make progress in achieving such objectives, my country has offered to host an international preparatory meeting in 2017.

Mexico will continue working to have migrants recognized as agents of change and development, so as to ensure that their human rights are respected and to eliminate statements of hate and discrimination against migrants. The international community can improve the situation faced by migrants. We have not yet honoured the commitment that we made to migrants. We must shoulder our responsibility, because migration is not just humankind's past and present; it is also its future.

The Acting Co-Chair: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. David Granger, President of Guyana.

President Granger: The Cooperative Republic of Guyana welcomes the convening of today's high-level plenary meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants. The meeting offers the international community an opportunity to commit to a comprehensive solution to a complex and chronic problem. The refugee and migrant crisis confronting the world today presents grave challenges to the international community. Images and accounts of men, women and children who are forced to flee their homes and homelands in search of safety are transmitted daily and graphically by mass and social media. The international community can no longer ignore the plight of those desperate refugees and migrants. Their condition and situation demand a commitment to address both the root causes as well as the human consequences that accompany the refugee and migrant crisis.

Conflicts within and among States are mainly responsible for most of the mass movements of refugees and migrants that we are witnessing in the world today. Refugees and migrants are, however, not the only ones affected. Conflicts between States, if left unattended or unresolved, can escalate into regional and even global crises that can threaten the existence of larger numbers of persons in wider areas, even beyond their countries' borders. The root causes of conflicts around the world that have spawned the refugee and migrant crisis must be addressed. Conflict prevention and conflict resolution must be part of the global response to the crisis of refugees and migrants. The international community has a responsibility to prevent such conflicts and to usher in an era of security and the preservation of peace between States.

Natural disasters have also been a cause of the refugee and migrant crisis. The global community must not ignore the impact that catastrophic natural disasters, including those caused by climate change, have had in triggering mass destruction, which produces refugees and migrants. Guyana is a member of the Caribbean Community. Six years ago, we were overwhelmed by the death, disease, dislocation and destruction inflicted on the Caribbean State of Haiti, a sister member of our Community. The Haitian earthquake left thousands of persons dead and consigned thousands of others to a life of being refugees in their own country. Haiti's agony is being compounded today by the creation of new waves of refugees from the Dominican Republic.

The New York Declaration on large movements of refugees and migrants (resolution 71/1) offers a path towards addressing the problem of large movements of refugees and migrants in a more coherent and comprehensive manner. The Declaration must be backed, however, by the determination of the United Nations to bring an end to international terrorism and inter-State and intra-State conflicts that are active, incipient and latent. Guyana supports the protection of the rights of all migrants. Guyana welcomes the process

that today's meeting will initiate for the convening in 2018 of an intergovernmental conference on international migration with a view to the adoption of a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration. Guyana intends to play an active role in that process. We intend to ensure that the root causes of conflict are eliminated and that peace will prevail in the world.

The Acting Co-Chair: The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Joseph Muscat, Prime Minister of Malta.

Mr. Muscat (Malta): I speak here today as the leader of a country that is European and situated at the centre of the Mediterranean Sea. We have, over a number of years, seen at first hand the refugee and migration crisis unfolding in our seas. Malta, being on a main migratory route from sub-Saharan Africa towards Europe, is no stranger to migration and refugee flows. To date, our country continues to receive a high number of asylum applications, which, given our small size and limited resources, have proved to be a major challenge. Given that direct experience, Malta has placed migration as a core area within its foreign policy and has long recognized the importance of tackling migration jointly as a community of States.

Despite the fact that we are already host to a number of refugees and persons receiving international protection, my country, as a member of the European Union (EU), has nonetheless subscribed to the plan to relocate asylum-seekers from Italy and Greece, and has made further pledges under the intra-EU relocation mechanism, because we believe firmly that the management of Europe's external borders is a collective duty that should be based on the principles of shared responsibility, mutual trust and solidarity. In that regard, the choice is either that of lurching from one crisis to the next and seeking short-term remedies, or of working towards a solution that has at its core the principle of solidarity with fellow human beings and all States, particularly countries of transit and destination.

The challenge we face is one requiring collective action, long-term strategies and comprehensive approaches. Those three core principles — coupled with a holistic approach that protects the vulnerable yet seeks to curb migrant smugglers, who are criminals and should be treated as such — should guide our endeavours to address that shared challenge. At the same time, we, the global community, should intensify our support to the countries of origin, transit and destination through enhanced cooperation on development and well-managed migration policies. Once implemented, such policies can help to offer migrants a better life in their own home countries and more sustainable management of the biblical-level migratory flows that we are seeing.

Migration is increasingly intertwined with human trafficking and the smuggling of migrants. It is appalling that many people escaping from conflict, persecution or misery fall into the hands of organized criminal networks that take advantage of their vulnerability and undermine security, both within and beyond the States concerned. One way to counter such crimes is by establishing and strengthening national programmes, along with regional and international cooperation. We should also consider bringing people-smugglers to justice in international courts.

Much of what should and can be done to address the root causes of migration and forced displacement can be found in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which most of my colleagues have mentioned and which duly recognizes the strong link between development and migration. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda has given us the tools to try to make a difference. Its various Goals address comprehensively, and in a cross-cutting manner, the different facets that can become push factors in migration and forced displacement. Sustained and inclusive economic growth, social development and environmental protection, as well as the goals of reducing inequality within and among peoples and countries and working to achieve orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility, are especially important. Those are goals that we all share. In that regard, I also believe that the private sector is a valuable, key actor that should be brought into the equation in order to further encourage an environment conducive to investment that can help to increase employment possibilities and provide better opportunities at home for potential economic migrants. We need to maximize opportunities for refugees and internally displaced persons.

The acute migration situation that has developed in Europe over the past year has brought to the fore the importance of devoting equal effort to both the internal and the external dimensions of migration. The European Union has taken several steps over the past year to scale up its work with external partners. Its leaders, gathered at the Valletta summit meeting on migration held in Malta in 2015, endorsed an action plan outlining 16 priority actions that they have committed themselves

to implementing by the end of this year, thus tackling migration and forced displacement in a comprehensive and holistic approach. The Valletta summit also led to the creation of a trust fund, consisting of an initial €1.8 billion, for financing projects to be implemented under the various thematic areas. Progress on that implementation will be assessed early next year when senior officials meet again in Malta.

In order to prevent the unacceptable losses of life in the Mediterranean Sea and bring order to migration and refugee flows, the European Union has also been working on a new partnership framework aimed at mobilizing every possible policy and tool to achieve shared objectives with third countries. The new approach builds on the outcomes of the Valletta summit, and while we should retain its focus on saving lives, we should also do more to dismantle trafficking networks.

The Acting Co-Chair: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Roch Marc Christian Kaboré, President of Faso and President of the Council of Ministers of Burkina Faso.

President Kaboré: On behalf of the delegation of Burkina Faso and speaking for myself, I welcome today's high-level meeting on mass displacements of refugees and migrants, which is one of the major challenges of our time. To begin with, we commend the Assembly's adoption this morning (see A/71/PV.3) of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (resolution 71/1), which demonstrates our shared willingness to seek ways and means today to seal a global compact for dealing with the issue more effectively and humanely, including balancing the delicate question of national borders with the need to respect the basic rights of refugees and migrants.

Population movements are a universal historical phenomenon that, from time to time and for various reasons — including the quest for a decent standard of living and better way of life — has always been part of the life of human society. It is a natural, legitimate desire — more than that, it is a fundamental human right. Our analysis and proposals for solutions to the migration issue will therefore have a chance of prospering and producing the desired results only when measured against that yardstick. If we are to cooperate effectively to halt or better control mass flows of refugees and migrants, we must identify and eliminate the underlying causes. Poverty, misery, unemployment and underemployment, inequality, exclusion, discrimination of every kind, intolerance and large-scale violations of dignity and human rights make for fertile ground for the mass exodus of whole populations. To that must be added, sadly, natural disasters, environmental degradation and the ever-deepening chasm between the developed and developing worlds. We must work together in strict respect for international human rights and humanitarian law. Above all, we must focus our efforts, individual and collective, on the implementation and follow-up strategies of the Sustainable Development Goals, backed up by an approach based on shared responsibilities and active international solidarity.

I would like to strongly reaffirm that when refugees and migrants are welcomed humanely and treated with respect and dignity, they can in fact make a significant contribution to the development of their communities, in the countries that receive them as well as in their countries of origin, and at the same time help to bring their peoples and nations closer together. Any instrument of control that does not take that aspect into account is inevitably destined to fail. That is why we must strengthen and, if necessary, adapt our legal instruments and institutional frameworks at the national, regional and international levels.

To date, with the support of partners such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, my country has been able to render all the necessary assistance to the 33,000 displaced Malians whom it has welcomed across its borders and whom it has officially recognized as refugees, in accordance with its international commitments. With almost one third of its population living abroad, Burkina Faso rightly appreciates the contribution of immigrants to national development and to a rapprochement among peoples. It has therefore invested in a policy of mutually beneficial cooperation with host countries that are striving domestically to create the necessary conditions for the effective participation of the diaspora in social and political life and in domestic development efforts. That is why a national strategy for migration is being developed, namely, in order to make migration from Burkina Faso's territory safer, more regulated and orderly.

Refugees and migrants should no longer be perceived as threats, but should instead be treated as a source of opportunity for themselves and for their host countries and countries of origin, as well as for

the international community as a whole. We, as leaders, have the individual and collective responsibility to strive towards that goal. I trust that we shall be successful.

The Acting Co-Chair: The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Tammam Salam, President of the Council of Ministers of the Lebanese Republic.

Mr. Salam (Lebanon): The world is witnessing the worst-ever crisis of forced population displacement in history, along with everything that that drama entails, including suffering, misery, criminality and the abuse of human rights and dignity. In short, the crisis is destroying people's destinies. That poses serious problems for our stability, security, economy and public services. Moreover, the situation is becoming more dramatic by the day, which does not bode well for the future of our country and for our future generations.

Since the beginning of the crisis, in 2011, over 100,000 Syrian babies have been born in Lebanon, with over 50 per cent of them born in the last 18 months. Today, the number of Syrians being born in Lebanon is greater than the number being resettled in other countries, fuelling a perilously destabilizing trend of internal growth. It is unthinkable that Lebanon could alone cope with an existential challenge of such a proportion. This cannot continue.

I am sure that you will agree, Sir, that, barring a massive intervention from the international community, Lebanon runs the risk of serious collapse. I should like to use this forum to appeal to the world, and especially to the United Nations, to urgently put in motion a plan comprising the following steps.

First, within three months, we need to draft a detailed logistical mapping for the safe and dignified return to Syria of the Syrians currently in Lebanon, specifying transportation requirements, departure locations and all associated costs. The fundraising process required for that plan should be started immediately. That will enable, when circumstances permit, its swift implementation. Secondly, we need to set up burden-sharing quotas for countries, both in the region and elsewhere, and to negotiate the enactment of resettlement efforts before the year's end. Thirdly, we must intensify the financing of development projects at both the local and the regional levels. Fourthly, we must arrange for reliable reporting on effective payments made by donors, organized by sector. Fifthly, we must launch a fundraising effort in favour of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East to enable it to address vital humanitarian needs, ensure the sustainable pursuit of its educational programmes and complete the reconstruction of the Nahr-el Bared Palestine Refugee Camp.

My country is in serious danger. What the Lebanese have done by harbouring 1.5 million Syrians in their country with a population of 4 million Lebanese is unprecedented. What the Lebanese have done by spending close to $15 billion that they do not have, in three years, to service the displaced Syrian population, is unprecedented. What the Lebanese have done by maintaining stability and order and safeguarding security, using means that they do not have, is unprecedented. What the Lebanese have done in order to ensure education for almost as many Syrian children as their own is unprecedented. What the Lebanese have experienced by, on occasion, being denied hospital beds because they are occupied by displaced Syrians is unprecedented. What the Lebanese have done by strictly clamping down on smuggling people to European shores is unprecedented.

My question is, when is the world going to assist Lebanon during these dire times? When is the United Nations going to rise to the task and significantly rally efforts to help refugees and migrants, in observance of its number-one responsibility, which is to safeguard peace and security?

The Acting Co-Chair: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Donald Tusk, President of the European Union.

President Tusk (European Union): The European Union welcomes this ambitious initiative, as no other global problem is more urgent today than the ongoing migration of millions of people. The United Nations still needs to reinforce its tools and find the money to deal with the humanitarian needs and other problems triggered by the current unprecedented wave of migration. There is a lot of catching up to do. We hope that the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (resolution 71/1) will mark a new pragmatic approach and a shift towards a global system where movement is more orderly, the responsibility is shared and no one bears the burden alone.

The Assembly must know that today the European Union has a clear objective, namely, to restore order at its external borders. That will lead to a further

reduction of irregular flows to the European Union. There will be no repeat of the year 2015, when more than 1.5 million irregular migrants travelled to the Union. At the same time, we are ready to increase humanitarian and development assistance for refugees, internally displaced persons and closed communities. Our new initiatives are already under way. We are finalizing compacts with Jordan and Lebanon, with the aim of providing an appropriate and safe environment for refugees and displaced persons from Syria, in exchange for additional European Union funds. We are also setting up new partnership agreements with African countries. Moreover, we are determined to continue our cooperation with Turkey and with the Western Balkans. In all of those concerns — the need to strengthen the European Union's external borders and to increase financial assistance for those in need — I want to underline that European Union member States stand united. That was confirmed at our informal meeting of the 27 heads of State or Government in Bratislava three days ago.

Global migration will accompany us in the future, and it is in our power to decide what our future will be in that context — whether it will be orderly, stable and safe or disorderly, unstable and unsafe. We need the political will, responsibility-sharing and practical cooperation of all players, and not two years from now, but here and now. Our discussion today gives me hope that we can make it happen.

The Acting Co-Chair: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Muhammad Jusuf Kalla, Vice-President of the Republic of Indonesia.

Mr. Kalla (Indonesia): For centuries, migration has been a natural phenomenon where people travelled across boundaries to seek a better future. Today, we are witnessing an unprecedented flow of helpless migrants with more complex motives for migration — conflicts, wars and social unrest in many parts of the world have forced people to leave their homes. In an extreme example, we have witnessed the international community standing idle while countless migrants drown in the Mediterranean Sea. That is intolerable. We must work together to ensure that such humanitarian tragedies are prevented from occurring again in the future.

Even though Indonesia is not a party to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, we continue to open our arms and provide humanitarian assistance to those in need. Currently home to almost 14,000 refugees and asylum-seekers, Indonesia is working together with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration to provide temporary shelters and facilitate refugee processing, particularly through repatriation and resettlement programmes.

In the past, we have provided humanitarian assistance to refugees and asylum-seekers. Between 1969 and 1975, we took in over 250,000 refugees and asylum-seekers fleeing from internal conflicts in countries in the region, such as Viet Nam. We dedicated an island to the establishment of the Galang refugee camp, which processed such refugees and asylum-seekers for over 20 years. However, today the challenge of addressing refugees and asylum-seekers is much different from our experience back in 1975.

Today, a holistic approach is necessary in dealing with the multidimensional phenomenon of irregular migration. Preventive measures and efforts to address the root cause are key. In that context, every country, every Government is responsible for maintaining an enabling environment for those people. Indonesia initiated the Bali process in order to holistically address people-smuggling, trafficking in persons and related transitional crime. The Bali process essentially enables countries and agencies to undertake burden-sharing and shared responsibility in addressing large movements of irregular migrants. However, let me make it clear that burden-sharing and taking collective action does not mean that we share equitable international obligations under the Convention.

This challenge is too big for any country or agency to handle alone. Better and more inclusive international cooperation is necessary. That is particularly true as demographic change has driven countries to look for productive labour forces and to find incentives for people to move beyond borders to find a better life. In order to address the distressing phenomenon of such increased migration, a drastic overhaul of our whole system is required, globally, regionally and nationally.

Globally, we are attempting at this meeting to reduce the world gap and to reconcile a particular source of distrust among countries. Regionally, we must stop external interference and create a more conducive setting for cooperation and empower regional organizations to play a greater part in managing the situation. At the national level, we must maintain security and stability,

as well as create opportunities for the employment of people. In that regard, Indonesia will develop a road map with a view to achieving a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration.

Indonesia fully welcomes the recognition by the high-level meeting of the multidimensional aspects of migration, particularly the positive economic contributions of migrants to the countries of origin, transit and destination. Indonesia also believes that, in order to achieve a better outcome, the commitment to ensuring safe, orderly and regular migration set forth in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development must be fulfilled. That is why we first sought ratification of the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

Finally, Indonesia sincerely hopes that this meeting will result in a real improvement over time aimed at preventing more individuals from losing their lives on their migration journeys, saving those in need of humanitarian assistance and ending the suffering of millions of migrants in faraway shelters.

The Acting Co-Chair: The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Lars Løkke Rasmussen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Denmark.

Mr. Rasmussen (Denmark): We are gathered here today to join forces so that all of us can look for answers to the complex challenges that we are facing. And I can assure the General Assembly that Denmark takes global responsibility. We spend 0.7 per cent of our gross national income on development assistance, and in the European Union, Denmark takes more than its fair share of asylum-seekers. Denmark is constantly among the top five humanitarian donors per capita. Other countries are encouraged to do the same, because we must act together.

It is my firm belief that the best way to deal with today's enormous refugee and migration challenges is to prevent violent conflicts in the first place, so that we prevent people from being forced to take up long and dangerous journeys. The circumstances associated with migration and asylum-seeking entail unbearable human suffering. They also put pressure on local communities receiving people in search of protection or a better future. That applies especially to countries that host many refugees.

It is essential to balance the needs of the local populations with the needs of refugees and migrants. Millions worry that the pressure of migration will make their communities collapse, and we must listen to them as well. The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (resolution 71/1) is an important step forward. I would like to underline three central principles.

First, we must operate within an international framework founded on human rights. We must preserve the obligation to provide protection to refugees, and we must distinguish between migrants and refugees, in order to not undermine the protection of those who need it the most. If we do not join forces to deal with illegal and irregular migration, we are putting our international regime for protection at risk. The Refugee Convention is intended for those in real need of protection.

Secondly, the root causes of refugee and migrant movements must be addressed through peacebuilding and long-term development. That is the only long-term solution. Thirdly, all States have a sovereign right to decide whom to admit to their territory, and all States must live up to their obligation to readmit their own nationals. If they do not, fewer people in actual need will get support.

We stand ready to use all relevant foreign policy tools to help countries live up to that obligation. For this year, 2016, and the next year, Denmark intends to increase humanitarian assistance to record levels of more than $350 million annually. This fall, we already expect to add $80 million to help refugees from Syria, Iraq and communities in the neighbouring countries, as well as in other places like Libya, where many are fleeing conflicts. We will help host countries manage and cope with the large burdens. We will support transit countries in their fight against the trafficking in and smuggling of human beings. We must put the migrant smugglers out of business. We must join forces to achieve the goal of well-managed migration and the protection of refugees, because we wish to preserve our ability to assist those in real need of protection.

The Acting Co-Chair: The General Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Alexis Tsipras, Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic.

Mr. Tsipras (Greece): I would like to warmly thank the Secretary-General for today's important initiative and the support of the United Nations to Greece. The large movement of refugees and migrants is a global challenge that no State can face alone. Either we will

manage to face it collectively, comprehensively and on the basis of our values, or we will fail. What is worse is that today we risk not only failing to face the challenge, but also betraying our values in the process. Nowhere is that more evident than in Europe, a Europe shaken by the biggest migratory pressures since the Second World War and by the effects of poverty, suppression and war in its broader neighbourhood, a Europe that is asking itself whether it is still possible to preserve social cohesion and security for its citizens without violating international law and, in particular, the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.

The people of Greece, confronted by a deep economic crisis, have faced this challenge every day for the past year and a half and our response is, "Yes, it must be possible". We faced it when 1.2 million migrants entered our country. We faced it when, through the unilateral steps of others, our northern borders were closed. We face it as we try, with the help of the European Union (EU) and the United Nations authorities, to support the nearly 60,000 migrants stranded in Greece and the new ones coming.

Our asylum service, which did not exist three years ago, is dealing with the fourth-largest number of asylum applications in Europe. Together with the Turkish and European authorities, we are trying to implement the very difficult, but necessary, EU-Turkey agreement, which has led to a radical decrease in the flows and, most importantly, in the number of deaths in the Aegean Sea. The new agreement is replacing the regular dangerous route to Europe with a legal one based on resettlement.

The challenges facing Greece are many, including strengthening the protection of borders and enhancing asylum procedures, but they can work only on the basis of shared responsibility and solidarity. We need the promises made to Greece to be kept; we need many more European asylum officials to support our asylum service, and many more relocations of refugees from Greece to other European countries. At the same time, we need to enhance cooperation with Asian and African countries of origin and transit, in order, for instance, to ensure the return of people not in need of international protection. If we do not agree in today's Declaration to make strong efforts to replace dangerous migration routes with legal ones, if we do not address the root causes of migration, if we do not accelerate the resettlement of refugees to countries around the world that can host them, we will fail. And, what is worse, we will provide a space where nationalistic, xenophobic forces can show their face. For the first time since the Second World War they will show their face.

In Greece today the challenge of humane and effective refugee and migration management is being tested. If we, the international community, fail to support that effort, the social and political repercussions will be felt not only in Greece, but everywhere.

The Acting Co-Chair: The General Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Giorgi Kvirikashvili, Prime Minister of Georgia.

Mr. Kvirikashvili (Georgia): The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was launched one year ago from the tribune of the United Nations with the pledge that no one would be left behind. With that statement, the States Members of the United Nations committed themselves to address the consequences of a migrant crisis that was already leaving millions stranded. Yet forced displacement has only increased since then, with a staggering 300 million international migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons registered this year. Against that backdrop, conflicts and insecurity in parts of Africa and the Middle East continue to drive mass exoduses, and the death toll of migrants crossing borders continues to climb. Millions globally are still at risk of being left behind.

The burden of forced displacement has not bypassed Georgia. Since the early 1990s, the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali/South Ossetia have witnessed several waves of ethnic cleansing under the occupation by the Russian Federation. Approximately 400,000 persons have been forcibly displaced — while Georgia's entire population totals only 4 million. Prospects for their safe return are grim, with the ongoing installation of barbed-wire fences along the occupation line. Meanwhile, ethnic Georgians in the occupied territories continue to suffer from daily discrimination.

Co-Chair Thomson took the Chair.

It is simply not possible to turn a blind eye to that problem and to what is going on worldwide. In the struggle Georgia is committed to pulling its weight. We have already received more than 4,000 asylum-seekers from various parts of the world such as Ukraine, Iraq, Syria, Nigeria, Egypt and Somalia. Georgian universities offer educational programmes for students from displaced communities. We are committed to continuing our assistance in the educational sphere,

together with interested partners, including donor countries and organizations that can provide financial support to that initiative.

The International Organization for Migration, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other international agencies have made immense efforts to alleviate the plight of the victims. But the gravity of the situation requires a coordinated political response. The situation now is unprecedented. We need to address the root causes of forced displacement to ensure that the situation does not get out of control. We need to be proactive rather than reactive, prevent the escalation of conflicts and preclude further waves of displacement. The question is: where do we start?

Violations of international law are one of the root causes of conflicts. If we can ensure that all actors abide by the law and strictly observe their commitments, we can start to move towards a more peaceful world. We can start to prevent crises and the mass exodus that ensues as a result of the millions affected.

At the Istanbul World Humanitarian Summit this May, we committed to promoting a new approach and supporting the emergence of safe, dignified and durable solutions for refugees and internally displaced persons. The right to safe return is a basic human right, and it must be guaranteed irrespective of political differences.

Let me reiterate in closing that Georgia will continue to contribute to international efforts in addressing large movements of migrants and refugees, regardless of our small size or our own security challenges.

Co-Chair Thomson: The General Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Xavier Bettel, Prime Minister of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

Mr. Bettel (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): We are facing a global migratory phenomenon of enormous scale today. The challenge is all the more important as it is we, the political leaders, who must find a balance between humanitarian needs and the necessity of finding medium- and long-term solutions.

There are many reasons for migration. There is not one single reason, or one single solution. In addition to the increasing number of conflicts in the world today, we must take account of the major trends of the century: the exponential demographic increase in certain areas of the world, climate change and rapid changes in technology, which also call for greater and more fluid mobility. Any quest for a durable, flexible and dignified solution, and any consideration aimed at better understanding and responding to situations of migration can be successful only if we join forces.

The meeting convened for today is a positive step forward, perhaps just a step, but in the right direction. It cannot be an isolated occurrence, and the commitments undertaken in this context must be followed up on. We must make clear to our citizens that a global crisis requires global responses, through, namely, shared responsibility and trans-border solidarity.

(*spoke in English*)

We cannot walk alone.

(*spoke in French*)

Such solidarity can be shown by hosting migrants or displaced persons, by financial assistance or through support in the form of human or material resources. It seems to me that each State should contribute to the extent that it can, on the basis of its gross domestic product and its population, with respect to all aspects of such solidarity.

Here let us recall that approximately eight of 10 migrants are from developing countries and that most of them are being hosted in developing countries, sometimes by the most disadvantaged communities, which nevertheless find the means to help others even though they themselves might be among the most vulnerable, as, for example, around Lake Chad. This situation shows the importance of attacking the root causes of migration and combating poverty. An increase in the resources allocated to humanitarian assistance is essential to save lives and must be rapidly complemented by assistance for development that meets the requirements of complex and prolonged crises. Educating the children of migrants and refugees must be our priority in this context.

By allocating 1 per cent of gross national income to cooperation and development, Luxembourg is contributing to eradicating poverty. Action to provide basic social services to a population and action to assist countries to educate all of its children and to keep them in school beyond primary education is the right thing to do.

However, we must create opportunities for the future. Economies must develop, attract investment and

prosper so as to create jobs. Humanitarian assistance and development cooperation cannot be our only responses. Other initiatives must be taken, and the Valletta summit is an excellent example. The work done in that respect by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration must be commended. In certain States, it is the lack of prospects that lead to economic migration. Would it not be useful, perhaps, to consider the simplification of certain rules of legal migration so as to allow for orderly and controlled flows, rather than leaving their management in the hands of criminal networks?

Migration is a historical and human phenomenon. Most States here, including mine, are witnessing or have witnessed migration, be it as a destination, origin or transit country. We cannot forget that waves of migration have left historical traces, and that due to these migratory flows, some would incite xenophobia, racism and violence.

Lastly, I hear some of these voices growing louder, which is giving fuel to certain populist parties at the European and even international levels. Some are introducing, sneakily, fear of the "other" into the political discourse. Today this approach is meeting with success, as the recent elections in Europe have shown. But this is a reality, and we as democrats have a problem. We must give complicated answers to simple questions, while populist movements have it easy: to the most difficult questions they give the most simplistic responses. Are they fair, legal or achievable? They do not care. They are looking for the quickest way to get their listeners to acquiesce quickly, without any focus on prospects or the future.

So let us remain democrats. Let us not forget our history and, above all, let us not allow populists to fuel the fears of the people that are listening to them and to whom no other solutions are being presented. We must send a strong message and show that we are coordinated and that we have responses and solutions. We must do more than speak about this; we must also take action.

Co-Chair Thomson: The General Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Milo Đukanović, Prime Minister of Montenegro.

Mr. Đukanović (Montenegro) (*spoke in Montenegrin; interpretation provided by the delegation*): I wish at the outset to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for having convened this high-level meeting devoted to this important topic.

Close coordination at the international level with a leading role played by the United Nations is an indispensable element in speaking with a single voice in response to this humanitarian crisis. The problem of refugees and migrants is a global issue. Although Europe, due to its geopolitical position, has throughout history been the most open and vulnerable to the consequences of conflicts in the Middle East, Asia and Africa, it has traditionally been an indispensable witness of the processes in which people find themselves fleeing from war or poverty. It is a common observation that after the Second World War there were no migratory flows such as those we are seeing today. That is true, but it also holds true that today there exist powerful international organizations whose mechanisms must be used in dealing with such complex political and humanitarian challenges. Responsibility for assistance to and admission of refugees and migrants must be more equitably shared.

Montenegro knows very well what a humane approach and moral and political responsibility and solidarity mean. Even as part of a joint State with modest capacities during the bloody dissolution of Yugoslavia, as the only republic that preserved peace and multi-ethnic harmony, it left its borders wide open to all the people who were fleeing the horrors of war. At one point we had more than 120,000 refugees, which represents a fifth of our population. In recent years, 15,000 refugees and displaced persons from the region have been integrated into Montenegrin society. We have done a lot to resolve their housing issues, especially as concerns the most vulnerable categories. Participation in the regional housing programme, funded mainly through European Union (EU) funds, within which we provided funding for housing for more than 6,010 displaced persons and Roma people, was generally helpful. The value of this project is around €28 million, while the contribution of Montenegro amounts to 15 per cent.

Montenegro has not been directly affected by the current migration rates to date. However, we have taken the necessary measures for the potential admission of migrants and refugees in the event of a sudden influx, in accordance with all international standards. Among other things, we prepared the draft Schengen action plan, which, in addition to dealing with issues of water safety in line with Schengen standards, will adequately

incorporate and develop plans for the control and prevention of irregular migration and asylum crises. As a country that is in negotiations for membership in the EU, Montenegro welcomes the definition of the new strategic framework of the EU in the field of foreign and security policy, which, inter alia, points out that the European Union will be committed in future to strengthening the relevant agencies and addressing the causes of the migrant crisis with full adherence to human rights and international law.

We also welcome the July 2016 EU Migration Partnership Framework initiative, which launched a new set of actions to address the causes of the migrant crisis. We also welcome the agreement reached between the European Union and Turkey in March this year. The best way to respond to displacement is to address the root causes of the problem through the prevention and resolution of conflicts by political means in a sustainable and lasting way, as well as through the strengthening of institutions and the rule of law, the eradication of poverty and the strengthening of social, economic and political inclusion and perspectives. All of that is much easier said than done, but we must strive towards such goals.

Montenegro expresses its readiness to take all measures necessary to achieve close cooperation with its neighbours, with the countries of possible destination as well as with the countries of origin of refugees with a view to efficiently coping with and finding a sustainable answer to the problem of refugees and migrants. We strongly support the adoption of the global compacts on refugees and migrants. We express our readiness to fulfil our part of the obligations and, according to our capabilities, constructively contribute to international efforts to reaffirm the principles of the protection of refugees and migrants.

Co-Chair Thomson: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Home Affairs of Malaysia.

Mr. Hamidi (Malaysia): Migration has become and continues to be one of the important security challenges faced by many countries in the form of irregular, illegal or mixed migration flows. Irregular or illegal migration involves cross-border flows of people who enter a country without the legal permission to do so, while mixed migration flows are complex population movements including both voluntary and forced migrants. The most common forms of irregular or illegal migration are related to illegal labour migration, labour trafficking and/or sexual exploitation, as well as those fleeing persecution, discrimination, natural disasters, poverty and armed conflicts.

In the early 1970s, Asian countries, including Malaysia, faced the exodus of Vietnamese boat people into our countries and, finally, they were successfully resettled in third countries with the assistance of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Nonetheless, to date, Malaysia is still hosting approximately 150,000 persons of concern, comprising asylum-seekers and refugees from 54 countries, though the term "refugee" has not been defined in any of our domestic legislation.

Despite not being a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention and 1967 Protocol, Malaysia has always rendered humanitarian assistance to such cases without compromising on its sovereignty, integrity and security. However, I would like to take the opportunity to highlight the lingering problem pertaining to the resettlement of the existing refugee population in Malaysia to third countries, which in certain circumstances might take years to achieve. That would create adverse economic, social, political and security problems for the transit countries. In that regard, I would like to urge UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration and other State parties to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its related Protocol to give serious attention to the problem and act on it promptly, especially in providing financial assistance and other humanitarian assistance.

Another problem pertaining to the existing refugee population is the authenticity of the UNHCR card issued to them. I would like to suggest that UNHCR look into the registration and issuance of a UNHCR card embedded with additional security features. However, the determination of refugee status is solely at the discretion of UNHCR.

I would like to give my strong assurances that my country, Malaysia, will not neglect our international obligations and commitments in addressing conflict-induced migration caused by war, natural calamities and other factors. At the seventieth session of the General Assembly, our Prime Minister pledged that Malaysia would receive 3,000 Syrian migrants from the conflicts in Syria and Iraq over a period of three years (see A/70/PV. 22). I am pleased to state at today's plenary meeting that we have received them in two batches, and we look forward to receiving another batch of Syrian migrants

by the year's end. Previously, Malaysia hosted 350 migrants from Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1997 to 2003 through a similar humanitarian commitment. It strongly reflects Malaysia's continuous devotion to this evolving issue.

Co-Chair Thomson: I now call on His Excellency Sheikh Sabah Khalid Al Hamad Al Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait.

Sheikh Al Sabah (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to extend our gratitude to His Excellency Mr. Peter Thomson, President of the General Assembly at its seventy-first session, and to the chairpersons of the working groups for their appreciable efforts in preparing for today's important meeting aimed at reaching an agreement on a political document that expresses the international community's awareness of the level of suffering of many people throughout the world. It entails working collectively to confront the challenges that imperil peace and security. The increase in the number of challenges we face today, as well as those faced by other countries suffering from a lack of food and medicine, compels us to meet all needs, since many people are now living outside of their homeland.

The total number of refugees stood at 244 million in 2015, which reflects a growth rate that is higher than the global population growth rate. We would like to emphasize the role to be undertaken by the United Nations to create innovative mechanisms and machinery to respond effectively to the crises besetting our countries, which have led to dangerous repercussions over the past decade. This has been the result of the increasing number of armed conflicts that endanger and kill hundreds of thousands of elderly persons, women and children. The international community has been unable to arrive at a unified and effective stance to curb and put an end to those crises and conflicts. We would like to emphasize the need to respect and apply international instruments and rules so as to arrive at political solutions that can save the lives of the innocent.

The Middle East is facing a very delicate and sensitive situation as the result of local infighting and in the light of the large migrations. Those conflicts have humanitarian, social, and cultural repercussions. That makes it necessary for us to strengthen our common action. The responsibility falls on the international community to ensure that such people do not get involved in terrorism and wars. The international community should press against incitement, xenophobia, and intolerance against refugees and migrants. Racial and religious prejudice should not be allowed to stand in the way of people achieving their aspirations to live in peace and security and to make a decent living.

We would like to emphasize the need to solve the problems of the refugees, particularly the Palestinian refugees, who have been suffering from injustice for around seven decades. We emphasize their need to return home, in accordance with resolution 194 (III), as well as the Arab Peace Initiative. We call on the international community to continue to extend assistance and support for refugees through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. We would like to ensure their protection in accordance with international humanitarian law.

The unanimous adoption of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (resolution 71/1) represents an important step on the path of our collective humanitarian efforts. We wish to see a world with a great deal of hope and determination, and we hope to see that our meeting today will strengthen the joint international efforts to overcome the obstacles and risks that our world faces. We also emphasize that the United Nations should remain the most adequate venue for international multilateral action to achieve our purposes and fulfil our aspirations, and it continue to take steps to achieve international peace and security.

Co-Chair Thomson: I now call on Her Excellency Ms. María Ángela Holguín Cuéllar, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia.

Ms. Cuellar (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): The issue of the large-scale movements of migrants and refugees across all continents requires common strategies to address the deep-rooted causes of those movements. Hundreds of thousands of people throughout the world leave their homes; some make the decision to leave and some are forced to do so. Without a doubt, the most important thing we can do is to protect human rights and act on the international promise to protect migrants. Unfortunately, there are also less supportive dimensions. There exists the dimension of organized crime, profiting from the expectations and plight of people who seek a life away from war, conflict, uncertainty and poverty.

That has particular relevance when we consider the movements of migrants in Latin America. Mass migration over recent years has led to unimaginable challenges for the countries of transit and destination. The countries of transit are not prepared, and they cannot establish permanent facilities because migrants are seeking destinations in the developed world. The international community, the United Nations and bodies providing assistance lack direction and are overwhelmed. There is humanitarian aid, but there is no consensus that can guide us in a timely fashion to put an end to conflict and keep people in their homes, provide them opportunities in their countries and prevent them from starting on such dangerous journeys.

We are all aware of the diagnosis, but we are unable to resolve the situation. Unequivocally, international cooperation is necessary. We also have to look for solutions that enable us to combat criminal organizations. This debate will enable us to come up with a necessary consensus and to take action. We have received the report of the Secretary-General on large-scale refugee and migrant movements (A/70/59). We have the annexes to the political Declaration (resolution 71/1), which propose a comprehensive response aimed at addressing the large movements of migrants by means of a global compact for safe, regular and orderly migration.

We have been called upon to meet the international commitments imposed on States and other international actors with a view to addressing the situation by guaranteeing human rights, safety and dignity. International cooperation and action are the tools whereby the international community can take concrete action to address situations of a humanitarian, social and economic nature in the countries of origin, transit and destination.

Now I want to talk about the work that Colombia has been developing together with the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Thanks to the autonomy of the IOM, we have been able to achieve real results in our efforts to help migrant populations. Thanks to that experience, Colombia hopes that the incorporation of the IOM into the United Nations will aid rather than limit efficient action.

We need a safe and transparent way of acting internationally, protecting the rights of all migrants, increasing their positive contributions to development, promoting multicultural exchanges and improving the public perception of migrants as vital contributors to our society. We have to meet the goal of facilitating regular, orderly and safe migration. That is vital if we are to do away with inequalities among countries and within countries. That is a task that is impossible to deal with unilaterally. We need coordinated actions and strategies. Colombia is therefore committed to adopting ambitious policies that offer a safe, prosperous future to migrant populations in the world.

Co-Chair Thomson: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Nasser Judeh, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriate Affairs of Jordan.

Mr. Judeh (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to extend my thanks to the former President of the General Assembly, Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, for his efforts in organizing this meeting, which is aimed at finding a better international response to the movements of refugees and migrants and which represents a turning point in our efforts to deal with international migration. I also wish to congratulate the new President of the General Assembly, Mr. Peter Thomson, for presiding over the Assembly at the current session, and I wish him success.

I also wish to thank the Special Adviser on Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants, Ms. Karen AbuZayd, who prepared the report that is the basis for our discussion today (A/70/59). Along with Ireland, we had the honour of co-facilitating today's meeting. In that regard, Jordan welcomes the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (resolution 71/1) and looks forward to working in the framework of the United Nations humanitarian agencies and achieving the goals of the Declaration as 2018 approaches.

Jordan, with its small geographical area but with enormous generosity and patience, is second in the number of refugees that it takes in at the international level. It is one of the countries most involved in terms of the outcome of this meeting. We have opened our hearts and homes to those who have fled the horrors of wars and conflicts. We have safeguarded the human dignity of millions of the most vulnerable, particularly women and children, at a time when the world is witnessing the most odious forms of the abuse of human dignity. Despite all the conflicts and their repercussions in the Middle East, Jordan has been a safe haven for many waves of migration.

This first summit meeting convened by the General Assembly on migration and refugees should make

it possible for us to find a solution to the oldest and most complicated refugee question, which is that of the Palestinian refugees. We must ensure the inalienable rights of the Palestinian refugees to return to their country in accordance with international law and within the framework of a comprehensive solution to the Palestinian question. That conflict is the longest-lasting crisis in relation to threats to peace. It is necessary to find an opportunity to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which is a major issue. The Palestinian question is at the core of a number of conflicts in the region. It has engendered the spread of extremism and has led to insecurity in our region.

Jordan, under the leadership of King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein, continues to welcome the largest number of refugees. We also protect the legitimate rights of Palestinian refugees, and we will redouble our efforts to do so. As a host country, we have a responsibility. The international community must also shoulder its responsibility in that regard and help us find permanent solutions with regard to the Palestinian question. We underscore the fact that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East must be able to carry out its work. We must therefore eliminate the deficit in the Agency's budget, so that it can provide services to the Palestinian refugees in Jordan and in all other areas under the Agency's purview, ensuring the dignity and rights of the Palestinian people.

Over the past few years, Jordan has welcomed more than 1.3 million Syrian refugees, a number equal to 20 per cent of our population. We have cooperated with the United Nations in building camps that have been able to accommodate only 10 per cent of those Syrian refugees, while many of them have been lodged throughout our villages and cities. We have opened schools and hospitals. We have assumed our responsibilities in providing protection, work and opportunities to Syrian and Palestinian refugees.

We have provided our Syrian brothers with services despite our difficult economic situation, while other countries that surpass us substantially in size or economic resources have not been up to the task to welcome even a handful of those refugees. Given the negligible amount of aid coming from the international community, our ability to continue providing services to refugees and our citizens has been diminished.

The Government of Jordan has developed a novel programme that enables the establishment of links between the international humanitarian need and the crisis in Syria. Its implementation will extend from 2016 to 2018, and, in that context, we will work closely with the United Nations and the international community. At the latest London Conference on Syria, Jordan and its partners adopted a comprehensive agreement that is part of a follow-up on the part of international and regional partners.

The Syrian migration crisis is not limited to Syria's neighbouring countries. It is a crisis of international proportions. We welcome the support afforded us by the international community. However, it allows us to respond to only 35 per cent of the exhausting costs associated with hosting refugees. We reiterate that we must find a political rather than a solely humanitarian solution to the conflict, which is now in its seventh year. The time has come for the international community to shoulder its responsibilities and help Jordan ensure the safety and security of the region as well as that of the world.

That is the goal of our summit meeting today, and Jordan must be supported in fulfilling its responsibilities with regard to the refugees. We are assuming those responsibilities on behalf of the international community in general. In urgent and crisis situations, the international community must support the founding members of the international community, irrespective of the size or importance of the State. It is a major responsibility that we are assuming on the part of the international community. Jordan will continue to redouble its efforts at the international level to confront the international migration problem, in particular as regards Syria.

Mr. Sogavare (Solomon Islands), Acting Co-Chair, took the Chair.

Our King will participate in the leaders' conference with the Secretary-General and the leaders of Sweden and the United States, among others. We hope that we will be able to reach an effective outcome that will make it possible for us to reduce the suffering of the refugees and the difficulties faced by host countries. The lack of a political solution will lead to a stronger feeling of frustration and injustice, in particular among youth. That will only encourage extremist tendencies.

The unprecedented number of refugees, displaced persons and migrants is a disgrace for the international

community. The stakes of this global crisis are of unprecedented size and proportions. We must collectively face the crisis by working along two equally important tracks. The first is based on solidarity and maintaining protection, as well as sharing the costs of hosting refugees, with a provision for flexible assistance that will expedite their resettlement in third countries.

The second track focuses on several matters. They include working on the primary root causes that have led to refugee status, which have long been mainly political issues; we need to abide by the purposes and principles of the United Nations, thereby ending occupation and enforcing resolutions with international legitimacy, and to respect international human rights instruments and conventions. We need to respect the international will to achieve long-term solutions so as to ensure the return of refugees to their homeland to enjoy stability, peace and security.

The Acting Co-Chair: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Prosper Bani, Minister of the Interior of Ghana.

Mr. Bani (Ghana): I am grateful for this opportunity to make a statement here on the position of Ghana as it relates to large movements of refugees and migrants. This high-level summit meeting is very timely, and we would like to thank the Secretary-General for enabling the international community to come together to design a blueprint for a better response to tackling the issues and challenges posed by this hydra-headed phenomenon.

Ghana's contributions to finding long-lasting solutions in that context are aimed at enhancing thinking and leadership in tackling refugee-induced displacements and harnessing the benefits of migration for development, based on experiential lessons. As the members of the Assembly may recall, quite recently my country experienced influxes of asylum-seekers from the West African subregion as a result of generalized violence, and it is now host to more than 21,300 refugees and asylum-seekers from 26 countries across the globe, residing in four camps and in urban areas.

The pattern of migration in Ghana involves internal migration, immigration and emigration, with a predominant characteristic of rural-to-urban migration, owing mainly to spatial inequalities. At the moment, Ghanaians are found residing in 33 countries, with an estimated net emigrant population varying between 250,000 to 1.5 million. Ghana has joined other countries in the search for ways to increase international cooperation to achieve better responses, based on the understanding that forced displacement is both a humanitarian and a development issue.

That has led to the development of the job-solution approach strategy, which seeks to encourage the utilization of available skills within the refugee and host communities with innovative business practices to maximize productivity for sustainable incomes and livelihood opportunities; encourage the participation of the refugees in the host community and local governance arrangements, so as to increase and deepen trust and ensure prolonged, amicable relations and coexistence; and ensure arrangements aimed at improving the quality of services targeting the most vulnerable among the refugees and the host communities.

The key policy goal of the national migration policy, which was recently promulgated, is to promote the benefits and minimize the costs of internal and international migration through legal means, with the rights and security of migrants well respected in order to ensure economic development in Ghana. The national migration policy establishes mutually reinforcing objectives, including addressing human rights issues, ensuring safe passages, and fighting racism and xenophobic tendencies, as well as guaranteeing the rights of Ghanaians to migrate.

Regardless of such rights, the strains of hosting refugees prevail. They include the increasingly protracted nature of displacements and the mounting complexity of the challenges facing host countries; dwindling global resources, assistance and related support services; the insufficiency of short-term interventions and the corresponding elusiveness of the desired results; the compelling need for long-term national and collective horizons to ensure more effective and sustained intervening impact; and the persistence of the triggers and challenges that induce the phenomenon.

Although most immigration currently occurs through safe and appropriate channels, it still remains dangerous for many would-be migrants. Ghana's participation in this high-level summit will therefore serve to reiterate the Secretary-General's call for shared responsibility geared towards lessening the burden of the mounting complexity of hosting challenges and governance arrangements for ensuring the full enjoyment of human rights and the safety of migrants, regardless of their migration status, as well as harnessing

the benefits of migration. Shared responsibility and robust governance regimes at the local, regional and global levels will be major linchpins of solid responses to address large movements of refugees and migrants. Displacements have national, regional and global dimensions, and long-lasting solutions envisaged under the ambit of this summit will be possible only with concerted and coordinated efforts across the various spectrums of international interactions.

The Acting Co-Chair: The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Rami Hamdallah, Prime Minister of the State of Palestine.

Mr. Hamdallah (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am honoured and humbled to join the Assembly today, during this important United Nations high-level meeting on large movements of refugees and migrants, as the representative of the Palestinian people, a people whose majority population is composed of refugees, constituting nearly a quarter of the world's refugee population, more than 40 per cent of the globe's long-term refugees, and the most protracted refugee crisis in contemporary history.

I convey the full support of our President, Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, for this important summit meeting on refugees and migrants, as well as support for their legitimate rights, especially the right to return, which is guaranteed under all international traditions and laws.

I carry with me the voices of our millions of refugees — more than 5.3 million men, women and children registered by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) — from refugee camps dispersed in our region in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and in occupied Palestine, including in occupied East Jerusalem, along with millions more from the diaspora in the Middle East region, Latin America, Europe, North America and beyond, where many of our refugees migrated in search of more stable and prosperous lives.

I carry their stories of loss and tragedy, displacement and exile, suffering and indignity, since the onset of their plight in the 1948 Al-Nakba, when most of our people were forcibly uprooted and driven out of their homes and ancestral lands, or fled for their lives during the Assembly's partition of Mandate Palestine and the establishment of Israel, including on the ruins of their homes and villages.

In the long years thereafter, they have continued to be unjustly denied their rights, including to return to live at peace and to compensation for their losses, forcing generation after generation to endure great hardships, deprivation and marginalization, repeated displacement and violent crises.

Yet I also carry with me a message of hope from Palestinian refugees. They, who have endured so many upheavals and misfortunes, remain resilient, committed to their dreams and legitimate aspirations, and hold firm to a conviction in humanity, in international law and in the arc of history and justice that will restore their rights and bestow upon them the dignity and peace that they have for so long been denied. They share the spirit of hope and resilience with their refugee and migrant sisters and brothers around the world, including and especially in our troubled region, standing in solidarity with them in this moment of need, offering solace and support as they all seek and await just, peaceful solutions to their plights.

We must work politically and legally to end the crisis. It is our moral duty to translate into action the statements made here in this Hall to remedy the plight of the world's millions of refugees and migrants and provide them with the humanitarian assistance they need to live safe, dignified and productive lives. At the same time, we should spare no effort to ensure that their rights are upheld, respected and restored, in accordance with international law, including human rights law, humanitarian law and refugee law, as applicable, and to address the root causes of their plight.

Based on this abiding obligation, the General Assembly has rightly persisted in its calls and efforts for a just solution to the plight of the Palestine refugees, including the right to return, in accordance with resolution 194 (III), and it has rightly supported the mandate of UNRWA for more than 65 years, ensuring the provision of vital humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian refugees, as well as to the Palestinians displaced in June 1967 and subsequent hostilities who are in need.

UNRWA is an example of how to find humane solutions to today's crises of refugees, displaced persons and migrants by fulfilling basic needs while also building human capital and self-reliance and insisting that no one be left behind in our collective pursuit of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

For us Palestinians, UNRWA has meant more than aid; it has been a lifeline, sustaining our refugees in the darkest of times, as witnessed in recent years, whether with the catastrophic conflict in Syria, with its massive spillover into Lebanon and Jordan, or in occupied Palestine, where the brutality and indignities inflicted by the Israeli occupation and the inhumane Israeli blockade have had a grave impact on refugee communities. As we grapple with the root causes of the current large movements of people, we must not ignore the fact that, for the first time in decades, Palestine refugees have been compelled to leave the region, including on perilous journeys across the sea, fleeing the ravages of war and poverty. This is a universal hope and desire that we see in the movements of refugees and migrants in our world today.

Of course, the presence of UNRWA for more than 65 years is also testament to the far-reaching consequences of the failure to secure just and lasting solutions. It underscores the need for a reinforced commitment by the international community to engage proactively in conflict resolution and prevention, in conformity with international law, and to tackle the root causes of forced and protracted displacement.

On this occasion, we renew our appreciation to UNRWA and its staff. We also commend the 30,000 national staff of UNRWA, Palestine refugees themselves, who have been serving their brethren as humanitarians, teachers, doctors, nurses, specialists, administrators, counselors, therapists, emergency workers and more. They are a testament to the fact that refugees are not necessarily a burden, but rather can be agents for good in the societies and countries hosting them, pending the achievement of just solutions, and also a testament to the power of education, a fundamental right and necessity for all refugees and migrants.

In that context, we also commend the ongoing support provided by the Kingdom of Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic to Palestinian refugees, and express our abiding gratitude for their support to the large Palestine refugee communities that they have hosted for nearly seven decades, and for their facilitation of UNRWA's mission and ongoing cooperation.

We also thank all donor countries and organizations from around the world, large and small, for their generous support to UNRWA over the long years, ensuring the continuity and quality of the Agency's programmes. We urge donors to continue to provide sustained and predictable support that is commensurate with growing refugee needs and remedies critical funding gaps to allow the Agency to fulfil its humanitarian mission.

We stress the importance of such principled international support, in line with abiding political responsibilities and humanitarian obligations, and appeal for continued solidarity with the Palestine refugees and the Palestinian people as a whole, pending the achievement of a just, comprehensive, peaceful and lasting solution to the question of Palestine in all its aspects. We are convinced that achieving the rights and freedom of our people is a political, security, humanitarian and moral imperative for our region and our world that must be urgently pursued.

The State of Palestine supports the commitments made in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants adopted at this meeting (resolution 71/1) as well as the commitments set out in the comprehensive refugee response framework. We highlight in this regard the urgent need to achieve a just solution to the plight of the Palestinian refugees that guarantees their right to return in accordance with resolution 194 (III).

We also support the global compact on responsibility-sharing for refugees (see A/70/59). We are proud to have been among the initial States to join the Group of Friends of Migration and reaffirms its solidarity here today.

In conclusion, we will pursue our cooperation with all international partners in seeking just, peaceful and lasting solutions to the injustices and challenges we all face, including a solution to the plight of the Palestine refugees, which remains among the highest priorities for the Palestinian leadership. In closing, we also stress our empathy and solidarity with all refugees and migrants in all four corners of the world, and our hopes for fulfilment of their rights for a better, safer and more dignified future for themselves, their children, their countries and our global family.

The Acting Co-Chair: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Paolo Gentiloni, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Italy.

Mr. Gentiloni (Italy): I am really proud to be here today bearing witness to the great humanity of the Italian people in hosting those who land every day on our shores. For years, Italy has faced a migration crisis in the Mediterranean region, and we have managed

thanks to the commitment and generosity of the women and men of Lampedusa, the Italian Coast Guard and the thousands of volunteers who have devoted their time to helping migrants and refugees after their perilous journeys across the Mediterranean. I would like to express my gratitude to all those people here before everyone.

Italy has long called for the involvement of the whole international community in managing the migratory phenomenon. I am therefore particularly pleased to see that, thanks to the sensitivity and vision of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Filippo Grandi, the principle of shared responsibility has been welcomed now by all States Members of the United Nations.

After all, what we are trying to do is not simply to resolve an emergency or crisis. We are working for durable solutions to a situation that will affect generations to come. On the one hand, we are all aware of our international obligations regarding the protection of refugees. Such protection is owed to those fleeing war and persecution. In my opinion, that protection should be expanded to cover new categories of refugees, such as those fleeing disasters caused by climate change.

On the other hand, even those seeking a better life, fleeing poverty and the lack of a future, have the right to an answer from us. They have the right to hope. They should be able to hope that a better life is attainable in their own countries and their own homes. In that spirit, through our proposal of a compact on migration to our European Union partners, Italy has been promoting a plan to develop a true partnership with African countries of origin. We have to invest in Africa to tackle the root causes of migration, which are primarily economic and demographic inequalities. But most of all, we should invest in Africa, because that means that we are investing in our own future.

We all know, however, that such a commitment will produce results only in the long term. Meanwhile, we must provide a humanitarian response; we must save lives. For that, I am asking for solidarity and the full commitment of the entire international community. With its search-and-rescue operations, Italy has been at the forefront of the migration crisis in the Mediterranean for years. Last year, Italian units saved more than 75,000 people; so far this year, they have saved more than 60,000. Those are impressive numbers, but even more impressive and more moving are the tales of pain and suffering behind those numbers.

We have to respond to that emergency right now. That is why, thanks once again to the support of civil society, Italy has been promoting a resettlement programme, the Humanitarian Corridors project, aimed at saving the most vulnerable among migrantsat least — I am thinking particularly of women and unaccompanied children. We should be able to ensure that they do not have to embark on a dangerous journey in the hands of smugglers across the desert or the sea. Our hope is that the Humanitarian Corridors project can be adopted as a best practice by other countries.

By all means, let us protect refugees, but let us also give hope to those who have lost it, to the weakest among migrants, such as children and women travelling alone. Let us give them hope, and in doing so we can also give our own society a hope and a vision. By protecting the most vulnerable we are protecting our own values. By saving children's lives we are saving our own future. Let us invest in our future. Let us reject the idea that the only prospect today for some young women and small children is reliance on smugglers.

We must come up with an immediate response to those in need of protection and with practical solutions for the most vulnerable migrants. That is Italy's commitment here today. I appeal to everyone here to help to provide protection for vulnerable migrants as well as refugees. We will raise the issue next year with our partners during Italy's presidency of the Group of Seven. We must not let a child fleeing Aleppo find his death on a Mediterranean shore.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.